



Town Meeting



Bulletin OF AMERICA'S
TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR
Sponsored by THE READER'S DIGEST

Should the German People Be Held Responsible for the Crimes of Their Nazi Leaders?

Moderator, GEORGE V. DENNY, JR.

Speakers

STANLEY HIGH
WILLIAM L. SHIRER

GEORGE N. SHUSTER
GERHART H. SEGER

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Should the Senate Ratify the San Francisco Charter?

(PREVIEW IN THIS ISSUE—See page 22)

Should the San Francisco Charter be accepted as it is written, or are there certain amendments which should be added? In making its decision should the United States take an internationalist or an isolationist view?

TUNE IN EVERY THURSDAY, BLUE NETWORK—8:30 p.m., E.W.T.



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Town Meeting



Bulletin of America's Town Meeting of the Air ★ George V. Denny, Jr., Moderator

Should the German People Be Held Responsible for the Crimes of Their Nazi Leaders?

Announcer:

The Reader's Digest, America's most widely read magazine, welcomes you to another exciting session of America's Town Meeting, the program that gives both sides of vital issues affecting your life and mine.

Tonight here at the Kleinhans Music Hall in Buffalo, New York, four noted authorities clash over a question the whole world is asking, "Should the German People Be Held Responsible for the Crimes of Their Nazi Leaders?" To open this important discussion, *The Reader's Digest* brings you the founder and moderator of America's Town Meeting, Mr. George V. Denny, Jr. Mr. Denny. (Applause.)

Moderator Denny:

Good evening, neighbors. Tonight we invite you once again to sit as a jury as we consider the question, whether or not the German people should be held responsible for the crimes of their Nazi leaders. Many of you have seen the ghastly pictures in your

papers, in the magazines and movies of the torture chambers in the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald.

General Eisenhower knew that these atrocities were so horrible that the American people would find it difficult to believe them without witnesses, so he invited a group of editors and publishers to go and see these atrocities with their own eyes. One of those witnesses is with us here this evening.

No one here tonight will defend the crimes of those who conceived and executed these acts of Nazi barbarism. But it is important, terribly important, for our future to know to what extent the German people should be held responsible themselves for these crimes and atrocities.

Mr. Stanley High, one of the roving editors of *The Reader's Digest* who has just returned from Germany as an eyewitness, and Mr. William L. Shirer, leading radio commentator and author of *Berlin Diary*, take a strong affirmative.

Dr. George Shuster, president of Hunter College and author of a book called *Germany, A Short History*, and Gerhart Seger, editor of the German-speaking paper here in America, *Neue Volkszeitung*, and former member of the German Reichstag, now an American citizen, uphold the negative.

It will be the task of the affirmative to show that the German people should be held responsible for the crimes committed by the leaders of their nation, and it will be the task of the negative to demonstrate the opposite.

We hear first from Mr. Stanley High, recently returned from Germany where he saw firsthand how the Nazis dealt with their enemies and those who opposed them. Mr. High. (*Applause.*)

Mr. High:

Mr. Denny and friends, I saw dead men piled like cordwood and waiting like cordwood to be burned—part of the German harvest of murder. I saw a freight train of thirty-two cars with 2,500 political prisoners dead for lack of food and water, their bodies piled on one another, hanging over the sides, strewn along the roadway and in the pleasant little German park near by.

In a strangulation chamber at Buchenwald, I saw the marks on the cement walls where tortured and beaten prisoners slowly choking to death had desperately clawed for a hold that would lift them up for one last gasp of air. I saw the gas chamber at Dachau. There was a nice bouquet of German flowers on the table in the

reception room. There were nice German mottoes on the wall. There was a neat pile of towels and soap on another table. The prisoners, you see, thought they were going for a shower bath. There were even shower-bath fixtures on the ceiling in the room in which they were ushered. But when the door was shut and the gas turned on, the Germans watched through peepholes as though they were at a side show while their victims were exterminated.

In the pleasant German city of Weimar we were shown the lamp shades and book ends and other living room decorations made from human skins, carefully selected, carefully dried, and cut into shape. They were quite the fad. Don't ask me how we knew these were human skins, the evidence was unmistakable.

For these crimes of their Nazi leaders, the German people are responsible. They are responsible for three reasons. First, by their own free vote they chose those Nazi leaders. The 1932 German election was a free election. Eight parties went to the polls, the Nazis among them.

The German people knew what they were voting for or against. *Mein Kampf* was already a German best seller. Violence against the Jews by Nazi mobs was already widely practiced. Hitler and Goering and Goebbels and Roehm and Streicher—all these Nazi unspeakables—were familiar names in every German home. Yet knowing what they did, the German people in 1932 went to the polls

and of their own free choice gave the Nazis five million more votes than any other political party received.

For the crimes of their Nazi leaders the German people are responsible because they chose those leaders. They are responsible also because they knew about the crimes which their chosen leaders committed.

Buchenwald and Dachau were set up in their grim business twelve years ago, in the very year that Hitler, after a vote of confidence from the German people, came to power. Buchenwald and Dachau were not exceptions, they were the rule.

At Oranienburg and at Belsen and at Nordhausen and Auschwitz and at Maidanek and every concentration camp we freed, did the German people know what went on in those camps, I ask you? Did the people of Weimar know when German soldiers at Buchenwald stole, as they uniformly did, the prisoners' Red Cross packages to share with their Weimar girl friends?

Did the people know who worked in the gun factories, where day after day prisoners were beaten to death before their eyes, or fell dead from starvation at their sides?

Did the people of Dachau know, when year after year train load after train load of dead, half dead, and dying prisoners pulled on to that siding? Did the people of Germany know when they watched such death trains creep slowly through town after town, and city after city? Of course, they knew.

Dr. Shuster and Mr. Seger may maintain that the German people, far from sinning, were in actual fact sinned against, and that we Americans were among the sinners. They may even describe for you the fear under which Germans lived. Perhaps Mr. Shuster and Mr. Seger will also tell us what the German people were afraid of. The German people were afraid because they knew—they knew precisely and exactly—what went on in those camps. They feared that the same fate might befall them, and because they knew, they must be held responsible.

Finally, and worst of all, knowing these criminals and knowing their crimes, the German people nowhere and at no time effectively resisted them. The German Government killed some Germans. Some thousands of others, like the heroic Protestant pastor, Niemoeller, they imprisoned. But it will be history's most terrible indictment of the German people that by thus eliminating these thousands of Germans, the Nazis eliminated—wiped out, mind you—from a whole nation of 80,000,000 people the will to fight for decency and justice and humanity.

Nowhere else could the Nazis accomplish that. Nowhere else could the thread of physical strangulation result in such total moral strangulation. In every country the Germans imprisoned and tortured and destroyed, but for every person eliminated in those countries a hundred sprang forward who loved decency, jus-

tice, and humanity more than they feared to die. But not in Germany.

In Germany there was no organized resistance. Among the German people there was no effective underground. There were, instead, two classes of people and only two. There were those millions who supported the Nazi regime. There were those other millions who were physically and morally too cowardly to oppose it.

Should the German people be held responsible for the crimes of their Nazi leaders? They are responsible! The Nazis did not make Germany. Germany made the Nazis. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Stanley High. Our next speaker knows something about Nazi methods of brutality as he's one who tried to help build a democratic Germany after the last war. He escaped from a concentration camp in 1933 and came to this country where he began lecturing and he's now editor of the German-language paper called the *Neue Volkszeitung*. Mr. Gerhart Seger. Mr. Seger. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Seger:

Mr. Denny, ladies and gentlemen. May I submit at the outset that I will not deal with tonight's topic as a former German. The Nazi guards at the concentration camp at Oranienburg where I was a prisoner twelve years before Mr. High saw them, those Nazi guards effectively saw to it that my German sentiments were somewhat curtailed. I should rather discuss

it as an American citizen, genuinely desirous of seeing the United States make the greatest contribution to postwar reconstruction.

Whether the entire German nation should be held responsible depends upon whether we regard all Germans as Nazis. It is a totalitarian way of thinking to regard any nation as a uniform monotonous unit. It is the democratic attitude to recognize in a nation the differentiations among its people, to see its multitudinous wealth of varieties.

Totalitarian thinking seems contagious, even if one makes allowances for war psychology. Years ago when Vittorio Mussolini described his bombing in Ethiopia in glowing terms, an outcry went up in this country and he was roundly denounced as a Fascist thief, finding satisfaction in blowing up women and children.

Today our own pilots give similar descriptions of their success in creating flaming infernos.

I know, this is war, but eventually we shall have peace and we should adopt a different way of thinking if we are to restore moral equilibrium to humanity. Therefore we must make up our minds regarding Germany. Are we working towards a lasting peace, or shall we merely put Nazism in reverse.

On the surface, reports from inside Germany do not seem encouraging, but they are not free of bias. Since our Army, in contrast with the skillful Russians, insists on its nonfraternization policy, it has not wished to let

through too many reports on the non- and anti-Nazi Germans.

Moreover, it will take time before the average German opens up when questioned by foreign newspapermen. The aftermath of twelve dreadful years of Gestapo terror is felt still. Grapevine news travels fast, and the assassination of the new mayor of Aachen by Nazi criminals serves to many Germans as a warning, at least to wait awhile before committing themselves.

Mr. Stanley High speaks of the Nazis as merely having killed or imprisoned "some thousands of Germans." The true figures are quieted. Even the so-called Nazi department of justice admitted to have executed during the four years, '39 to '43, no less than 11,313 political opponents, not counting the tens of thousands who perished in concentration camps.

As for imprisonment from 1933 until 1940, there were 71 concentration camps filled with German anti-Nazis exclusively—the total number running into many hundreds of thousands. Therefore, we cannot hold the German people as a whole responsible. It would be a gross injustice toward all German anti-Nazis. Besides, all ordinary Germans are sufficiently punished right now by the chaos resulting from the war.

Our air forces recently stated that German bombing of London and Coventry compares with Allied bombing of Germany in the ratio of 1 to 415. True, Germany under Hitler did start the war and brought her destruction on her-

self. But now the destruction is there and it constitutes quite a punishment. In addition, the individual Nazi and war criminals must be prosecuted to the limit of the law. I am not afraid of such punishment going too far; I am afraid it will not be carried far enough.

Mr. Joseph Pulitzer of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* the other day quoted an American general who said, "We cannot punish these German generals as war criminals. They are soldiers like ourselves and fought for their country as we fought for ours."

That is exactly what I am afraid of: an incredible international solidarity among some professional militarists. So let us take care that the real criminals are held responsible, that German militarism is uprooted.

Having seen these revolting pictures of Dachau and Buchenwald, we are apt to forget our sense of proportion. Nazi sadism is nothing new. I, for one, told countless Americans about it since 1934. But those were the years of the appeasement policy. Everybody did business with Hitler. Our own State Department rebuked Ambassador Dodd when he declined to grace a Nazi party rally in Nurnburg with his presence.

Those years of recognizing Nazi criminals as a government, of maintaining diplomatic relations with gangsters, of rewarding Hitler with Austria and Czecho-Slovakia, has deprived us of any moral right to condemn all Germans alike. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Mr. Seger. I notice you're making Stanley High awful mad. He's writing to beat the band over there. Now we hear from a man whose fine scholarship in the field of journalism has won him an enviable place as a leading American radio commentator. His book *Berlin Diary* has been read by millions and will be read by millions more. It is a pleasure to present, Mr. William L. Shirer. Mr. Shirer. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Shirer:

I say the German people should be held responsible for the crimes of their Nazi leaders. And I think the American people should not be tricked or deceived on the issue. We were once before and you know what happened.

In my opinion, Dr. Shuster and Mr. Seger are fundamentally wrong on two things when they say the German people are not responsible for the Nazi regime, and therefore, for its crimes, and when they ask us to trust the democratic Germans.

The trouble with that is, there aren't any democratic Germans, except a few like Mr. Seger who recently became an American. Pastor Niemöller, just released from seven years in a Nazi concentration camp, stated a typical German view the other day. He said the German people are incapable of democracy as it is known in America, and wouldn't like it if they had it. The German people, he added, long for authority, for a Kaiser, that is, or a Hitler, or the next bully of a war-making

dictator who comes along, if we allow one to come along.

But we are dealing tonight mainly with the question of the responsibility of the German people for their criminal regime. Well, did the German people support Hitler, or did they not? If they did you will admit they share the responsibility for his crimes.

Let me ask you this. Do you believe, as Dr. Shuster and Mr. Seger believe, that Germany could overrun most of Europe, knock out the great French nation, almost knock out Russia and Britain without the active, loyal, wholehearted, and fanatical support of the overwhelming majority of the German people? How deceiving to try to make us think that this gigantic war effort of Germany could have been rung from an unwilling nation, even by Nazi terror. It couldn't have been and wasn't.

No, the German people gave their unstinted support to it, and to the Nazi regime's bid for world conquest. In doing so they share responsibility for Germany's hideous crimes.

I would like to put another proposition to our opponents. If the German people really cannot be held responsible for their awful governments, as you say, be they dominated by Bismarck, Wilhelm II, or Hitler, then you must concede that the Germans have no right to be recognized as a responsible and sovereign people. (*Applause.*) But, if you recognize them as a sovereign people, with the right to organize and run their own nation, then you must admit

their responsibility for their government, and for all the evils which that government has perpetrated. You cannot, I submit, have it both ways.

It has been argued tonight that it was very difficult for the Germans to oppose their barbaric Nazi regime. Of course, it was, but in the other lands, which the Nazi barbarians ruled more ferociously than their own, there was always an underground. In Germany, Mr. Seger, in a book, once said the German underground deserved the highest admiration. What underground? Even today our authorities have not been able to discover one worthy of the name.

Mr. Seger complains that the American army does not wish to let through too many reports about the anti-Nazi Germans. No, Mr. Seger, I can assure you there is no American army censorship on this point. The reasons our correspondents have not reported on the anti-Nazi Germans is that they haven't found any.

Is it not time, therefore, that we have done with this awful swindle of dividing the German people from their gangster regime?

I stand by the greatest living German writer, Thomas Mann, also now an American, when he wrote a few months ago, "It is impossible to draw a neat dividing line between Nazism and the German people." From the very first day of this war, Germany's opponents were faced by the combined German ingenuity, courage, intelligence, discipline, military ef-

ficiency—in short, by the whole power of the German nation which stood as such behind the regime and fought its battles. They were not faced by Hitler and Himmler who would be nothing at all if the strength and blind loyalty of German manhood were not fighting and dying with misguided valor for these criminals.

I think Thomas Mann is right. The German people have a grave responsibility for Germany's crimes. We would be fools not to recognize it. Let us not be fools. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Mr. Shirer. Now we are happy to welcome to the growing list of distinguished Town Meeting speakers, the president of Hunter College in New York the author of *Germany—A Short History*, Dr. George N. Shuster. And I expect he is going to take sharp issue with Mr. Shirer. Dr. Shuster. (*Applause.*)

Dr. Shuster:

May I say, first, that the idea of collective guilt or collective responsibility, which Mr. Shirer and Mr. High are sponsoring, is one of those convenient, romantic fancies which the student of ethics can only associate with the gifted but imprecise imagination.

If my five brothers and four sisters rob a bank in spite of my preachments, no one will hold me responsible because my family is guilty. The city of Sodom appears to have been vice ridden, but Lot was absolved from blame.

And so if there be a just man in Nazi-infested Germany, he is a just man regardless of whether he is a German. To say that he is not is to believe in corrupted blood streams and other contagious fairy tales.

Christian tradition has always repudiated the pagan, but it has also always believed in the just pagan. Are there just Germans who are innocent of Nazi crime?

Hitler came to power through less than 40 per cent of the voters who voted for him. The opposition consisted primarily of four groups. The Jewish-Christian tradition—by which I mean the Catholic Church, the most vigorous section of the Protestant Church, and Judaism — the Free-Social Democratic Trade Unions, the Communist party, and the small company of Liberals.

Let us look at their records since 1933. The story of the Communists is fairly well known. Though many were absorbed into the Nazi party, a nucleus went into the opposition under a most exacting leadership. Losses through execution by the Gestapo were enormous. I have known Willi Muenzenberg, their leader, and I know that the bloodshed appalls.

Let us look at the story of the Jewish-Christian tradition. Heroic Jews have lived through the whole dire persecution and are now reopening synagogues.

Since 1933, over 300 official anti-Nazi statements by the Catholic bishops have been issued and circulated. I think I know the

response of this group to their leaders as well as any American knows it. To say that their opposition was neither active nor costly is false. From December 1933 when Cardinal Faulhaber preached four sermons against Nazism, tens of thousands of Catholic priests, religious and laymen, were sent to concentration camps. Has Mr. High heard of Father Aloys Mayer? If so, does he hold this Catholic martyr representative of so many responsible for Hitler's bestialities? The story of Protestant opposition has been told by a series of reputable Americans like Stewart Herman and Kressman Taylor.

Why should we refuse to admit that from the beginning Hitler made ferocious war against Christian and Jew? Why should we hold his victims in that conflict responsible for his crimes? Why should we not say rather that the free flowering of churches and synagogues in Germany would mean a tremendous victory over Nazism?

The story of the Free Social Democratic Trade Unions is also well known. There is evidence in Mr. Shirer's own *Berlin Diary*. The leaders of those unions watched ten of thousands of their people go to prison, exile, concentration camps, and death.

Why should any American wish to believe that honest, upright, democratic Germans in this group, men like Ehrhart, Auer, and many others upon whom the scourge of Nazism lay so heavy are guilty of the very horrors of the concentration camps in which so many of

their best friends perished in agony?

In short, I say as a Christian, what earthly reason is there for shutting one's eyes to the story of religious heroism which has been so tragically unfolded? Is martyrdom so cheap that the martyrs can be laughed at as if they were peddling lamb chops in New Zealand?

As a democrat I say, are there so many brave men who love the ideal of liberty and have suffered greatly in its defense that we should complacently decide tonight to plaster with moral tar and feathers men who were with us in the spirit, even though they were Germans?

I've known about German concentration camps for a long time. Ever since 1935, I've tried to publish memoirs by friends and acquaintances who survived those camps. I have a whole sheaf of shocking documents but there was so little interest that only one actually appeared—*Beasts of the Earth* by Karst. His associates at Dachau were German and Austrian priests and ministers, editors, trade union leaders, and plain people. It would seem to me a fantastic blunder if now, when at long last the public realizes what went on in a place like Buchenwald, it should actually be led to believe that the victims of Buchenwald were responsible for Buchenwald.

There are millions of Germans who are guilty. Some are ghastly criminals but there are millions of Germans who are not guilty.

Let us not be led to believe that the only way out is to make Germany a penal colony. The Russians do not take that point of view. They can see the obvious truth that German Communists are useful. Why should we not likewise concede and declare, declare proudly that there were many democratic Germans who believed that we would liberate from bondage the spirit of free Germany? (*Applause.*)

Moderator Denny:

Thank you, Dr. Shuster. Now before we take the audience questions, let's do a little questioning among ourselves up here around the microphone. Mr. High, you seem to be the most uncomfortable at this point. Suppose we hear from you.

Mr. High: Well, I'm not in the least uncomfortable because Dr. Shuster brought up the question of Lot and collective responsibility. As I recall it, God got Lot out of Sodom and then destroyed the city because the city was collectively responsible for its sins. (*Applause.*) Furthermore I certainly agree with Dr. Shuster that if he had a son who went wrong and robbed a bank I wouldn't want, if I could help it, to hold him responsible. Nevertheless, if he had a son, or a brother, or a sister who cultivated the company of bank robbers, who studied the business of bank robbing, who went out into the neighborhood and organized the children of other families in the business of bank robbing and then announced to the world that bank robbery hence-

THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

WILLIAM LAWRENCE SHIRER—Mr. Shirer, author and radio commentator, was born in Chicago in 1904. After graduating from Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1925, he went almost immediately to Europe where he became Paris editor for the *Chicago Tribune*. After one year he became foreign correspondent for the *Tribune*, a position he held from 1926 to 1933. From 1935 to 1937, Mr. Shirer was foreign correspondent for the Universal News Service. Then from 1937 until 1940 when his anti-Nazi broadcasts made things a little too hot for him in Germany, he was a Continental representative for the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Returning to America, Mr. Shirer wrote his best seller, *Berlin Diary*, from voluminous notes which he had managed to mail and carry out of Germany with him. His news broadcasts are heard regularly.

STANLEY HOF LUND HIGH—Mr. High was born in Chicago, Illinois, in 1895. His degrees include an A. B. from Nebraska Wesleyan University; S.T.B. from the Boston University School of Theology; and Litt.D. from Nebraska Wesleyan. In 1919, Mr. High was made a member of the Reconstruction Committee in Europe and later the same year went to China as a member of the Methodist Mission. As a correspondent at various times for the *Christian Science Monitor*, and as roving editor for *The Reader's Digest* since 1940, Mr. High has traveled widely. He has also been an editor of the *Christian Herald*, current events lecturer for the National Broadcasting Company, and organizer and president of the Good Neighbor League. From 1924 to 1929, he was assistant secretary for the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist-Episcopal Church and a lecturer on international affairs.

During World War I, Stanley High was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and served as an aviator. He is the author of a number of books and many magazine articles.

GEORGE NAUMAN SHUSTER—President of Hunter College since 1940, Dr. Shuster is also currently a member of the general advisory committee of the Division of Cultural Relations of the Department of State and a member of Enemy Alien Board No. 2 of New York.

Dr. Shuster was born in Lancaster, Wisconsin, in 1894. He has an A.B. and an A.M. from Notre Dame; a Certificate d'Aptitude from the University of Poitiers, France; and a Ph.D. from Columbia. He has been a member of the faculties of Notre Dame, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, and St. Joseph's College for Women. From 1925 to 1929, Dr. Shuster was associate editor of *The Commonwealth*; from 1929 to 1937, he was managing editor; and now is a contributing editor.

During World War I, Dr. Shuster served as a sergeant in the intelligence section of the U. S. Army. He is the author of numerous books.

GERHART HENRY SEGER—Born at Leipzig, Germany, in 1896, Mr. Seger came to the United States in 1935 and is now a naturalized citizen. Beginning his career as a typesetter in 1911, he became a journalist in Kiel, Berlin, and Plauen, Germany. He was secretary-general of the German Peace Society from 1928 to 1933, and during the same time was editor of *Volksblatt*.

In 1933 Mr. Seger became a Social Democratic member of the German Reichstag and member of its foreign affairs committee. He was reelected but was arrested without charge and kept in jail three months and in a concentration camp for six months. In December 1933 he escaped. Since 1935, Mr. Seger has been editor of the *Neue Volkszeitung*, a German-American weekly published in New York City. He has lectured widely throughout the United States and Canada, and has written several books.

During World War I, Mr. Seger served in the German air force.

forth and on a certain date would become our business, and he didn't stop it, then I would say the element of collective responsibility, including Dr. Shuster, begins seriously to enter in. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Dr. Shuster, I think he's calling on you.

Dr. Shuster: May I say first of all that my point about Lot is

this: The Lord made very certain that Lot was an innocent person in Sodom. My point is, let's make sure of the innocent people in Germany. Let's not say to them that they shall not have the same ethical consideration that Lot had in his time. I didn't say that a man who had robbed a bank should not be held responsible. I

said that a member of a family who had urged his brothers and sisters not to rob a bank could not be held responsible because they had. My sole interest in this question is to emancipate the struggling Christian church from responsibilities for the crimes of Hitler. It is not responsible for those crimes. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Mr. Shirer.

Mr. Shirer: As to the responsibility of the Christian church, I'd like to remind Dr. Shuster of the statement that Pastor Niemoeller made the other day when he said that he was against the Nazis because of religious grounds but not because of political grounds. To prove it, you'll remember, he offered and volunteered to join the German navy on the first day of the war.

Before the audience asks the questions, I have a long one for Mr. Seger, which I do not mean personally, but I wonder if he could clear up in our minds the difference between what he has said tonight and what appears in the paper of which he is editor, the *Neue Volkszeitung*.

Day before yesterday the *New York World Telegram* carried a dispatch from Washington. It said, "Since the surrender of Germany, certain German-language newspapers in this country have opened up with blasts at Allied unity protesting a harsh peace and playing down the horror-camp atrocities. A survey of these newspapers shows," this dispatch continues, "the *Neue Volkszeitung*, appealing

to all German-speaking Americans to rally in support of Germany. It declared that the danger now is no longer that Germany may grow too strong but that Germany may sink too low. The paper criticizes the present occupation of Germany." This paper—your paper, Mr. Seger—the dispatch continues, printed an editorial against the showing of movies of the atrocity camps. Why, Mr. Seger?

The *World Telegram* dispatch says that between May 10 and 16, the week in which the German atrocities were coming to light in American newspapers, your paper, the *Neue Volkszeitung* did not give them any space. If this is true, why? Finally, the *World Telegram* dispatch says, "One of the main lines of criticism is against Russia. The *Volkszeitung*, it says, speculated on a possibility of a split among the Allies. I just wondered if you would explain why? (*Applause.*)

Mr. Seger: I am very glad that Bill Shirer injected the words "if this is true." Being a newspaper man, he knows about misquotations and I have written to the *World Telegram* demanding a retraction of that dispatch because it is wrong on every single point and was probably written by someone who doesn't read German himself. As a matter of fact, I not only am not against showing of those films, but I suggested editorially that they should be made compulsory in Germany. What I said to the showing over here was only that I don't think that children should be

admitted. I still maintain that since we, in this country, do not arrange for any public executions any more, I think that children have no place at those films and that is all I said. (*Applause.*)

As far as our attitude toward Russia is concerned, it is very simple. The *Neue Volkszeitung* is a democratic newspaper. It is opposed to every kind of dictatorship. We have warned, editorially, against the foolish talk about war with Russia but we have maintained that the United States can conduct a far more successful policy with Russia if it would not try to appease Stalin. We should have learned from the appeasement policy with Hitler that a dictator—and Stalin is a dictator—cannot be appeased; it only raises his appetite. We feel that the United States should insist upon a clear-cut coolheaded policy toward Rus-

sia, not running into war, but not appeasing, either. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. Seger. Well, we strayed a little off base there, but I am very glad that Bill Shirer and Mr. Seger both had a chance to say their say on that. Now, if you gentlemen will hold your ammunition for just ten seconds while we pause briefly for station identification.

Announcer: You are listening to America's Town Meeting, the program that gives both sides of questions vitally important to you, sponsored by the most widely read of all magazines, *The Reader's Digest*. For a complete copy of this discussion, including the question period immediately following, send for the *Town Meeting Bulletin*. Just write to Town Hall, New York 18, New York, and enclose ten cents to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Now, Mr. Denny.

QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

Mr. Denny: It's time for us to have questions from this fine Buffalo audience assembled by a special Buffalo Town Meeting host organization, by the Seventh War Loan Committee of Erie County, and Station WGR. Every ticket to tonight's broadcast represents the purchase of one or more War Bonds. This is just another reminder, friends, in case you haven't bought every one you can possibly afford.

Now we continue our questions and invite each one of you to par-

ticipate in this discussion. We'll take just as many questions as possible. The gentleman right there on the aisle, please.

Man: My question is for Mr. Stanley High. Granted that the German people are guilty, how are you going to try, convict, and sentence 90 million German people?

Mr. Denny: I knew that would come up. Mr. High?

Mr. High: I am not a lawyer nor do I know about how, in any detailed manner, the German people should be punished. I can

only say I don't think, as Dr. Shuster hinted, that anybody proposes that Germany should be made a penal colony. Our job tonight is not to determine how the German people should be punished but whether they are guilty and deserve some kind of punishment. You can ask me the question—do I think we should beat the German Army? You could have asked me that six weeks ago and then go on to say, "How are we going to beat them?" I have the conviction we should beat the German Army but it is not up to me to say how they should be beaten—that is Eisenhower's job. If we decide the German people are guilty, we can leave it to the intelligence of the United Nations, led by the United States and Great Britain, to devise just ways and means of doing it. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: The gentleman over there on the aisle.

Man: This question is for Mr. Seger. Do you believe, as Mr. High states, that the German people were aware of the criminal tendencies of the Nazi party at the time they elected the Nazis?

Mr. Seger: Yes, those that voted for Hitler certainly knew what they were running into. Unfortunately many people in Germany did not take Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*, seriously but so did many people abroad not take it seriously, and my contention is that if dealing with Hitler is a crime of the German people then all the governments that conducted the appeasement policy are equally guilty.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman over along the side wall.

Man: A question for Mr. Shirer. Is it not true that dictators seize power from the people and, therefore, if we would hold the German people responsible for the leaders' mistakes, wouldn't we be using the same tactics that he used in persecution of the Jews?

Mr. Shirer: I don't think so for one moment, no. Hitler, as you remember, seized power legally according to the Democratic method of the Weimar Republic. Therefore, to say that he seized power against the will of the German people is not historically true.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman back there in the aisle.

Man: (Question indistinguishable.)

Mr. Denny: How can you separate the sheep from the goats?

Mr. Shuster: You have to look for them. We have, however, certain evidence on which to base a preliminary computation. We know that there were active opposition groups. I have enumerated the major opposition groups. I think the most important of them were the religious opposition groups. It may be that Pastor Neimoeller believes in the constitutional monarchy; it may be that Cardinal Faulhaber is one of the most ardent democrats of Europe. Both are united in their opposition to Hitler. We can start there and I think if we continued, over a period of years, we could find a great many Germans with whom

we could work together for the rebuilding of human society.

Mr. Denny: Now, you've stirred up Mr. High again.

Mr. High: I've got this suggestion to make. I would be willing to consider as guiltless all Germans who for a minimum of five years were in concentration camps. (*Applause.*) Let me point out this about this underground business. Nobody could have any greater admiration than I have for the eloquence of Cardinal Faulhaber and the honesty of his opposition to the Nazi regime. The only test of that eloquence is what happened after his audiences heard it and the fact of the business is that so far as any external, active resistance opposition was concerned nothing happened. I, personally, asked General Eisenhower the question, three weeks before the war was over, whether in Germany they had found one single scintilla of evidence that there was any effective resistance movement anywhere in Germany and he said "Absolutely none."

Mr. Seger: Since Mr. High fixes the time of innocence on five years in a concentration camp, I'm awfully sorry that I don't qualify. After six months of being beaten, I thought I had gotten the general idea and I escaped.

Mr. Denny: I think Mr. High probably exonerates you. The lady on the aisle here.

Lady: Mr. Shirer. Do you believe that Prussia and the Prussians should be separated from the rest of the German Reich?

Mr. Shirer: I think it would be a rather good idea to separate the Prussians from the rest of the Reich. As you know, they are greatly responsible for what happened to Germany. However, I would point out to you that a large number of the Nazi leaders, men like Goebbels and Goering, were not Prussians and that you won't settle the entire German problem by only handling with the Prussians.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The man in uniform.

Man: Mr. Seger. Do the German people feel enough of the guilt to attempt to organize in an effort to combat the lies and ideology of Nazism?

Mr. Seger: I would never speak—and that is one of the reasons why I am on the negative side on this issue—of *the German people*. When I came to America and decided I had to get into the spirit of the English language, one of the books I read was, Stuart Chase's *Tyranny of Words*, and he said, "All generalizations are false, including this one," so therefore, I cannot answer your question by talking about *the German people*. But when the first few weeks of their being as dazed as they are now will have passed, and when we begin talking to the German people, which the Army prohibits so far, I bet you we will learn plenty. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentlemen right here on the stage.

Man: Mr. Shirer, if the Germans are responsible for the Nazi crimes, what distinctions, if any,

would you make among the classes of the Germans mentioned by Dr. Shuster?

Mr. Shirer: I would make very small distinction, indeed. While it is true that many Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, did not always like the Nazi regime, it is also true that almost to the extent of 100 per cent, the Catholic and Protestant Germans supported Hitler, supported the German war effort, and fought fanatically against our boys, as the soldier can tell who has just spoken, and therefore you can make no distinction as to them, when you want to fix the responsibility for what Germans did to the rest of the world. *(Applause.)*

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The lady with the good-looking hat. *(Laughter.)*

Lady: Dr. Shuster, you said there are millions of innocent and millions of guilty Germans. Could you give us a more accurate ratio between Nazi and the anti-Nazi?

Mr. Denny: Yes. Would you name a few million for us? *(Laughter.)* A few million good ones.

Dr. Shuster: I should like to believe that I possess the power to distinguish, at a distance of this sort, between so many people. If I may perhaps illustrate by giving you one or two examples.

In the year 1938, I visited one section of the German underground which then existed, Mr. Shirer, very definitely. As I visited it, I saw on the mantel pieces of the homes of the families concerned, little urns of ashes. Those

represented what remained, for the most part, of the fathers and brothers of the family. I should say that in one street in Cologne, there were at least ten such urns on mantel pieces that I visited.

I think I might say to you that in 1932 the center body still had, in spite of all the opposition that was mustered against it, five million votes. I am quite certain that of that five million, four million at least have remained loyal. I think one may say that, insofar as the German Social Democratic party is concerned, we could reckon, let me say conservatively, on an equal number of democratic Germans.

I don't want to give you the impression that there is an equality. I think that the impact of the Hitler propaganda on Germany has been tremendous. I think the younger people have been badly infected. But, that makes it all the more important for us to remember that we do have friends there. People who are interested, and people who will help us to rebuild Germany.

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Mr. Shirer has a comment at this time.

Mr. Shirer: I think we ought to get straight about the German underground. I, of course, in my time there, I knew not only one, I knew six members of the German underground, but the point is, that in every other country which the Nazis dominated and that we went through last fall—France, Belgium, Holland, and also up in Norway—you knew who

the leaders were, and you knew what they were doing.

But when, in the five years that Germany was at war, did they throw bombs until the very last summer of the war when they were thrown by some old reactionary generals? During the five years there was no attempt on Hitler's life or on the lives of the other Nazi leaders. I, myself, have seen a hundred occasions when if there were ten Germans with any courage, they could have tossed a bomb at Hitler and knocked him out of the way. But in all the long five years there was no real underground of Germans who were willing to risk their necks to stand up for the sort of things which the decent people in the other countries did and sometimes suffered for so having done. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. Shirer. Mr. Seger?

Mr. Seger: I think it should be stated in all fairness that you cannot possibly compare the European countries, as far as the underground goes, with Germany. In Germany the Gestapo with all its informers was an outfit of 865,000 officers. One for every one hundred people. The Gestapo did not have people enough to go around who spoke French and Polish and Czech and Danish, and Norwegian, etc., to have one-twentieth that force in those occupied countries, and therefore, that control over Germany was far more effective than in any of the European countries. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman in the top balcony there.

Man: Mr. Shirer. I may perhaps be repeating what you have already stated, but in your period of duty in Berlin did you ever find or hear of evidence that the German people disapproved, or even resented, the excesses that were committed against the Jews and other opponents of the Nazi regime?

Mr. Shirer: I heard of a very few, but one of the most shocking things I think to us American correspondents in Berlin at that time was that when we got the tales of the terrible atrocities in Poland, and sometimes when we talked to what we considered the decent Germans that we knew—those of our acquaintance—we were shocked by their lack of even interest in the terrible things that were being done at that time to the Poles and to the Czechs.

Mr. Denny: All right. Thank you. Mr. Seger wants to comment on that.

Mr. Seger: I should like to give one incident. When we conquered the City of Cologne, the Associated Press reported that 163 Jews that had been thought dead for a long time emerged from the rubble of the city, because they had been hidden for eight long years by 163 Aryan families who not only ran the risk of being arrested but who did share their ration points—their red points for eight years—to have these Jews survive. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Shirer: But, Dr. Seger, you know perfectly well that at the

time of the most unspeakable atrocities against the German Jews, not to speak of what they did to the Poles and the Czechs and the others, there was very little sentiment among the German people about the whole matter—they rarely even discussed it.

I'd like to say just one thing about Mr. Seger's previous remark about the Gestapo in Germany. He said, of course, the Gestapo didn't speak these foreign languages and having seen some of the things that they did in the occupied lands, I can assure him that it was not necessary for the Gestapo to speak Norwegian or French or Yugoslav, or Dutch or Belgian, for them to carry out the horrible atrocities which they did. I think it was much worse in Norway or France and certainly in Poland or Yugoslavia than it ever was in Germany, but their men had enough guts to stand up and fight it. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you. Now a question from the man in the balcony.

Man: Question for Mr. High. Has the spirit of revenge or retaliation ever contributed to world peace or security?

Mr. High: No, sir, I certainly don't think it has, and I think that if we're going to go after this in a spirit of retaliation and revenge, we're going to lose the whole object. Our object is justice and in the Old Testament the sum total of Christianity is summed up in the phrase which says "to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" and notice the

order. First is to do justly. There may be five million out of seventy-five million Germans that are completely and totally innocent. The question we've got to decide is which is the more important—that we should show mercy to those five million or do justly by the seventy million and allow them to build the way to another world war because of our concern for that minority. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Stanley High. Now, while Mr. Seger and Mr. Shirer prepare to summarize this evening's discussion, America's Town Meeting and *The Reader's Digest* present tonight's special guest. Just two weeks ago he was appointed by President Truman as Director of Home Food Supply in War Food Administration—a very good man to know. He's Mr. Paul Stark of Missouri. Mr. Stark. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Stark: The audience here at Buffalo bought War Bonds to attend this exciting meeting—War Bonds to help get the fight over with as quickly as possible. I hope every one of you in the listening audience has bought at least one extra bond in this mighty Seventh War Loan. Your bonds are essential to victory. Buying them is your job.

There is another important job every American can do. Growing a Victory garden is absolutely necessary this year. We must grow all the food we can. We've had a lot of bad weather during the past two months and in many parts of the county it's still bad. On my own farm in Missouri constant cold,

rainy weather has made this year one of the worst we ever had for planting. Now when the world needs food so badly, we've got to make up for the late start. We can do this by taking the best possible care of our gardens, by successive plantings, and by keeping our gardens working at full capacity clear up to hard freezing next fall.

But growing food is only half the job. We must also save food for next winter. Some of you may be surprised to learn that after the fighting stopped in Europe, military food requirements kept right on increasing. As President Truman pointed out, our soldiers in Europe are eating more canned fruits and vegetables because they are changing from combat rations to regular meals. Supply lines to feed our troops are the longest in the history of warfare. Along the thousands of miles of these lines, food must be kept moving.

Fortunately, there's still time to plant your garden now, and there's greater need than at any time since the war began for more gardens and better gardens. Thank you. (*Applause.*)

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Mr. Paul Stark. Now for the summaries of tonight's discussion, we hear first from the negative, Mr. Gerhart Seger. Mr. Seger.

Mr. Seger: Since Mr. Shirer made it a point tonight that not having killed Hitler is one of the signs that there isn't any underground in Germany, I should like to remind him that there was an attempt, a strong movement, fairly

strong, resulting in an attempt on Hitler's life last July. It did not succeed, but neither succeeded the Norwegian underground in killing Quisling, the Dutch in killing Seyss-Inquart, the French in killing Laval.

Secondly, I should like to remind the audience of the many reports we had in the papers when our troops discovered the subterranean war factories inside Germany, it turns out that the V-1 and V-2 bombs were mainly manufactured by foreign labor and those 12 million slaves Hitler uprooted from the other countries and took to Germany were under the exactly same pressure as the German people. They certainly didn't give Hitler their whole-hearted support, but neither did the Germans. Terror works against everybody.

Mr. Denny: Thank you Mr. Seger. Now, Mr. William Shirer.

Mr. Shirer. I'd just like to remind Dr. Seger that the one attempt on Hitler's life that he mentioned was made by reactionary Junker German generals. Where were the democratic Germans all that time?

To sum up, our opponents have held that we, the Allies, were partly responsible for the Nazis and for what happened to Germany. As Mr. Seger said, we have no moral right to condemn all Germans alike since our government recognized the German regime. This, it seems to me, is a typical German argument, but false. The Germans like every other people are responsible themselves for their government, for

what it's done, and they ought to be courageous enough to face that responsibility.

We have tried to show that no nation could have gone so far in this war had it not had, as Thomas Mann said, "the overwhelming support of the citizens and of their admitted talents." Since they gave that support to help make Germany win this war, they must share the responsibility of German war crimes.

The American people, we believe, have had enough of this being tricked into believing that there are good and bad Germans, that the German people are never responsible for their regimes. To be fooled once may be forgiven but not a second time unless you want a third German war. Do you?

Mr. Denny: Thank you, Bill Shirer, Mr. Seger, Stanley High, and Dr. George Shuster. Well, neighbors, what do you think? Should the German people be held responsible for the crimes of their Nazi leaders as Mr. High and Mr. Shirer have maintained or are Mr. Seger and Dr. Shuster right in their contentions? This is a ques-

tion on which your opinion is tremendously important. So won't you sit down tomorrow after you've had time to think it over and write us at Town Hall, New York 18, New York, and let us have your opinion. You might send a copy of your letter to your local newspaper so as to stimulate other people in your community to think about this vital question. Next week we turn to another topic of very immediate interest which is occupying the delegates of San Francisco and the people of nearly every nation of the world. Will you tell them about it, Bill Robinson?

Announcer: Next week, Commander Harold L. Stassen, member of the American delegation to San Francisco, and Marquis Childs, Scripps-Howard columnist, take the affirmative and Senator Styles Bridges of New Hampshire, and Kenneth Crawford of the magazine *Newsweek*, take the negative of the question, "Should the Big Five Veto Power Be Included in the San Francisco Charter?" So listen next week for the sound of the crier's bell, same time, same station.

TOWN MEETING PREVIEW

Should the Senate Ratify the San Francisco Charter?

By CHARLES E. MARTZ

The subject outlined in this preview is to our best knowledge the one which will be used on Town Meeting of the Air Thursday evening, June 28, 1945. However, in view of the rapidity of wartime developments there is always a possibility that another topic which seems more urgent may be submitted.

The charter of the newly organized United Nations is very different from a law introduced in and passed by Congress. It is different from a treaty made with one nation. In San Francisco some fifty nations collaborated in writing the document which now makes its way to the Senate of the United States. The details of the document have been hammered out in the rough and tumble of general discussion. The final document probably pleases nobody, a situation very similar to that of 1787 when the new Constitution of the United States emerged from the convention.

The first point that arises, then, is this: Should the document be accepted (or defeated) as it is written—without suggested amendments and without reservations? Amendments to a bill in Congress may be quickly accepted or refused by the other house. Changes in a treaty made with one nation may be rather easily taken up with the officials of that nation and a decision reached. Changes or reservation in the San Francisco Charter will probably be equivalent to a defeat for the charter.

The reason is clear. Every change will have to be accepted by every one of the contracting na-

tions. It is hard to imagine that the San Francisco delegates have not given consideration to every change that might be suggested. The document as presented embodies the structure upon which agreement could be reached. To open up the question once more at the present time would probably result in nothing.

Our Town Meeting topic, then, is practically this, "Should the Senate Ratify the San Francisco Charter As It Is Now Written?"

Attitude Toward Imperfections

—If we accept this statement that the imposition of any changes or reservations will mean the defeat of the charter, it is well to ask what should be our attitude toward the obvious imperfections of the document. We may be sure that most Senators will find something in the document which they do not like. Some will object to the veto power. Others, who lean to the opposite side, will deplore clauses which permit the discussion of immigration, tariffs, and other matters which may be considered domestic affairs. There will be plenty of material which can be criticized.

What should we do about the imperfections of the charter? The convinced isolationist will be able

to use imperfections to argue against giving up the whole thing. Sincere supporters of an international organization may wage a fight to make the document as perfect as possible. Others may take the attitude that any organization which does not flagrantly violate our interests, and which does not have obvious seeds of its own failure, should be accepted.

A discussion on the question scheduled for Town Meeting will vary as the experts select one of these points of view. The possible questions to be answered are these:

1. Should the United States be a part of *any* world organization? The isolationist has a definite point of view. The United States must look out for the United States first of all. That means competition, not cooperation. We should be strong enough to insure against disaster as we take care of ourselves in the rough and tumble of world competition. The internationalist—to use a very loose word—sees only another war in such a policy and insists that some peacetime sacrifices, in goods and even in sovereignty, will be a good investment if it can prevent, or even postpone, another world conflict.

2. Assuming that a world organization is desirable, does the San Francisco charter have elements which will be injurious to the United States without compensating values? Are there details that are so objectionable that they constitute a reason for destroying the work of the conference?

3. In spite of all objections, should the charter be accepted as the best possible at the moment, with confidence that improvements will be made as experience shows the need for changes. Those who hold this view will immediately bring up the experience of Americans with their own Constitution. It seems clear that the original document was not pleasing to many persons of 1787. Patrick Henry used his best efforts to try to defeat ratification. Two-thirds of the New York State delegation at the Constitutional Convention left the meeting and refused to sign the completed instrument. The fight for ratification was long and hard.

Yet our leaders finally came around to the point of view suggested by this third question. They admitted that something had to be done to avoid chaos. The Constitution was the only instrument upon which agreement could be had in the convention. To defeat it meant to keep the status quo, which all admitted was bad, for agreement on different provisions in a new constitutional convention was unthinkable. The Constitution was ratified and we have been adapting it to our use for more than 150 years.

Or What?—One more element should enter this discussion. We seldom may choose between absolute good and absolute evil, between black and white. Our choices must be between various shades of gray, between alternatives that have both good and bad elements.

In discussing the action that we should take on the San Francisco charter, we must remember that we are choosing between alternatives. It will not do merely to extol the virtues of the charter or to point out its faults. We must compare the course of action that we advocate with the alternative.

The Senate will either ratify the San Francisco charter or we shall

have that situation. Which will be better for us? Which will be better for the world? Neither picture will be wholly perfect. It is always difficult to choose between alternatives each of which is subject to criticism. It should be clear that criticisms do not constitute a reason for rejection unless the alternative course of action offers less serious faults.



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